Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Faith That DOES NOT Save
Scripture: Acts 8:9-24
Code: 1726

Father, we thank You that it is true that man looketh on the outward appearance and God looks on the heart. Not only do we sense that from the song but even from our Scripture lesson this morning when we see a man who looks so good on the outside but when the truth was known the inside was not right with Thee. Father, may nobody in this place leave today who's not right with Thee in their hearts. We commit this time to You. Bless our study. We pray in Christ's name. Amen Turn in your Bible to the ?th chapter of Acts and we're going to consider these verses this morning that deal with Simon the Sorcerer who illustrates faith that does not save. Faith that does not save. Last week we began our study of the eighth chapter which is a very important chapter in the book of Acts because it records for us the first great missionary move of the new church. The church bursts forth out of its solitary Jewishness and its identity with Jerusalem to reach the world.

And we see that in chapter ?. The church was born as we've seen in our study of Acts over the past few months in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

It filled Jerusalem with its doctrine and now it begins to move out. And i is moving out in response to persecution as the church filled Jerusalem wit its doctrine it aroused the hatred of the Jewish leaders who in turn persecuted the church, the persecution resulted in the scattering of believers a wherever they went they bore the gospel. And so persecution resulted in preaching. And we saw last time how the persecution was really ramrodded by a man named Saul who later became the apostle Paul. And the Bible says ?:3 that he made havoc of the church, entering into houses and dragging people out and committing them to prison, both men and women. And so the persecution was wholesale and widespread. It really began with the catalyst of the martyrdom of Stephen who was killed for the sermon which he preached in chapter 7, incensing the leaders. So the church was born. The church reached Jerusalem and God knew it was time to move out so God used persecution as the method. For the church being persecuted, fled in scattering itself about it wound up in Judea and Samaria and there bore the message of Jesus Christ to the people. Now we saw also last time that wherever the message is preached there are always two results. There's truth faith and there's phony faith. There are the wheat and the tares, the faithful - the phony, the rocky ground - the good soil, the abiding branches - the branches that are cut off, those who believe to the saving of the soul - and those who draw back unto perdition. Both of those are always there whenever you have the preaching of the gospel. True believers and believers who make a mental assent but whose faith does not save. This, then, becomes the key to chapter ?. For in chapter ? you have the fact of the two types illustrated.

Simon becomes an illustration of faith that does not. save, beginning in verse 2?, the Ethiopian eunuch becomes an illustration of faith that does save.

And so we see, Philip then, the main character as he confronts both Simon and the Ethiopian. One illustrating the faith that doesn't save and the other the faith that does. And this is to be understood at the very beginning of the ministry of the church that there will be both in this church, Grace Community Church, right here. There are people who are true and there are people who are false. Would to God, that we could detect them. Sometimes we can. Sometimes that becomes manifested, but we know enough about Satan to know that he always sows the tares among the wheat. And this is so from the very beginning.

Philip, then, begins by confronting Simon who is the first tare that we know of sown by Satan in the church. The first false believer so named.

And then later on Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch who works under the authority of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, and who illustrates to us the faith that does save. But keep in mind that the point of the chapter in a broad sense is to show us that there will always be both at the preaching of the gospel.

Now Simon looked so good externally. Now Philip was one of the Christians that was scattered and one of them who was preaching. And he was one of those chosen by the early church to be leaders, in chapter ?, he was a prophet, he was also an evangelist. And in the course of his minis he had brought about a great revival under the energy of the Holy Spirit in Samaria. And in that time in Samaria he confronted this man Simon and so we meet that confrontation. And Philip was actually convinced that Simon was for real. And I'm so glad for that in one sense, it's sad that we can't discern but in another sense I'm glad that Philip didn't know anymore than I'm able to know, that Philip baptized a man who wasn't a believer, I've don the very same thing. Not knowingly but unknowingly. I always think of the one I have mentioned to some of our folk, I baptized a man who turned out later to not have been a believer but only had apparently put on a front about it, it all looked so good to me and later on and now he is a producer of pornographic films. And so this happens but I thank God that He's the final judge and I don't have to stand in judgment. I can only do the best I can even as Philip did. And Simon looked good, look at verse l3. You know, I've always said, look at this one, I've always said there's three things that prove your salvation is real visibly, only God knows but there are three things that I always look for and that Scripture lays out. Number one, to believe: number-two, to obey; number-three, to continue. Now I've said that many times in different contexts and maybe not together like that but that's basic. You always want to say when somebody - is somebody a Christian or are they not, you want to say, number-one do they believe, number-two do they obey, "For he that cometh to Me must not only believe", that's true, but Jesus said, "If you love Me you will keep My commandments"

And the third thing is to continue, to continue. The book of Hebrews repeatedly, repeatedly, repeatedly establishes a true Christian as a one who continues. And so we always want to look for those three things.

Well, we come to verse l3 and look, "And Simon himself", what? "Belie that's number one, "and when he was baptized", that's obedience. Baptism was a question of obedience wasn't it? He obeyed. Thirdly, "He", what's the next word? "Continued" Boy, does he look good. But like the song said that Peggy sung, How about your heart, Simon? You look good on the outside, God looks on the inside. Boy, Simon looked good. He believed, he obeyed in Baptism and he continued. It's no wonder that Philip was convinced. There wasn't anything missing at that point, apparently. But Simon was sharp. He was a phony, he was the devils man, he was a demonic magician placed by Satan to infiltrate the church and only God really knew.

And that's the way it always is. It is so hard, to know - that's why the work of the church is difficult. The work of the church isn't difficult because of what Satan's doing in the world it's difficult because of what Satan's doing in the church. That's what makes it hard. In Matthew l3 the is a parable that we must understand because it's basic to this whole point Verse 24, Matthew l3; "Another parable put He forth unto them saying", this is Jesus, "the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man who sowed good seed in his field". A guy goes out and sows some seed. "And while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat". darnelles, a tare appears to be very much like wheat and very difficult to distinguish from the wheat and if you try to uproot the tares you're liable to pull up the wheat. And so the enemy sowed the tares and he went his way. "When the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from where then hath it tares?" Where did that stuff come from? "He said unto them, An enemy hath done this.

The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?"

Should we go and start ripping up all the tares? "But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up the wheat with them." We can't really run around accusing everybody of being a tare, we just don't know that we might get some of the wheat upset. He says, "Let both grow together until the harvest and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them but gather the wheat into barns." When the harvest comes you gather it all up then you can separate it. And He explains this parable later on in the same chapter so that they understand what He's saying, verse 3?; "Then Jesus sent the multitude away", He always left the multitude confused, He gave the parable and then He gave the explanation to the disciples. But that was a point, see. He was hiding these things from the wise and prude and revealing them to

babes. "So He went into the house and His disciples came unto Him saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man The field is the world, the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one." Satan moves in and sows tare in the church. "The enemy that sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire so shall it be in the end of the age. The Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity and shall cast the .

into the furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Now, you see, there the Bible says very explicitly, and this is a parable of the church age, that in the church age, Matthew l3 contains parables of the church age, in the church age there will be this problem of distinguishing the true from the false and both will grow up together. It's like the mustard seed that turns into a giant big bush and Christianity is a conglomerate of things some real some unreal, some true some false and that's Satan's ploy to confuse the world and it works. And you've got so much stuff masquerading under the guise of Christianity that it s no wonder that the man in the world, the average man, can't figure out what Christianity is.

Simon had all this possibility going for him and from all outward appearances, from Philip s view and my view and everybody else's view, he would have appeared to be right on. But he was doomed, you see, he lost out on salvation with all this proximity, he was like Judas was only Judas is even a more outstanding monstrosity of the illustration that Simon is, of one who was near the truth and missed it. Now why did Simon mess up? Why did he blot this opportunity? Why did it happen? Well, he had a bad theology.

Now I want you to get something and get it very clearly. True salvation, people, is not only based on faith it is based on faith based on truth. It is based on a faith in true theology. Now when I say theology I mean doctrine out of Scripture. Faith based on faulty doctrine is faulty faith. It isn't' enough to say - Well, so and so believes in God, so and so believes in Jesus What God and what Jesus and what do they believe about Them? That's the point. Simon believed, Simon was baptized, Simon continued but Simon's who thing was based on faulty doctrine, four wrong views that I discovered in t text. He had a wrong view of self, he had a wrong view of salvation, he had a wrong view of the Spirit, he had a wrong view of sin. And when you've got a wrong view of all those basic things, his anthropology was messed up, his soteriology was messed up, his pneumatology was messed up, his hamartiology and that messed up his whole theology. The cardinal doctrines of theology he had all messed up and to say that he believed was meaningless. Because his faith was not founded on truth.

Let's look at these things. First of all he had a wrong view of himself. His anthropology was lousy. That's the doctrine of man. Now this is a common thing that keeps men from true salvation, they've got the wrong view of man. They think man is something good. You hear this all the time, don't you? Man is good he just needs to fan the spark of his goodness. I think we've been hearing it long enough to know it isn't so. This is a common thing, you know, and people think they're good and especially religious people. Why they think, - God couldn't pass me by.

If He really knows me, I mean, heaven's got to be for folks like me, I'm good. I give to the United Fund, the Community Chest even give to a telethon now and then. My kids are cub scouts, my wife takes care of the people at the hospital. I even once in awhile give money to the church I go to, I believe in God, I believe in Jesus. The assumption is that God is applauding all of that. The fact is God is sickened by it. Driving last night out to Citrus College to speak to some young people in a conference and Matt and Marcy, Matt's my oldest and Marcy's next, were with me. They often go to meetings with me not because they want to hear me preach but because I always take them to get an ice cream afterwards. But anyway, it's good fellowship.

But anyway we were going out there and Matt says, out of the mouth of babes, he says, Dad, he says being good's hard. I said, I know it is, Matt, especially in your case and he said, yeah it's hard. And he said, Try as hard as you want, he said, you just can't really do it all the time. He said, You know why do people want to try to hard to be so good when it's just so easy to ask Jesus in and not worry about it? And I did a double take, you know.

And I thought, you've been listening to somebody. He said, You know, I think it's so easy to ask Jesus into your heart and then you don't have to worry about trying to be good all the time. And Marcy pipes up in the back seat about four decibels louder than anybody else, she always talks like that, she says, Well, my teacher said that you could go to church and you could read your Bible and do your lesson and even give your offering and go to hell if you didn't ask Jesus into your heart. Is that right, Dad?

I said, That's right. But you know, there are people in this world who think they're good. The Bible says, - All their righteousness is what?

Filthy rags. You see, that's what's wrong to begin with with Simon's theology. He's got a lousy view of himself. Verse ?, look at it: "But there was a certain man called Simon who previously in the same city", that is in Samaria, "used sorcery and bewitched the people of Samaria giving out that himself was some great one". Now that is faulty anthropology. He was not some great one. You see, he came to God not because he needed God but because he thought that he could gain some more glory for himself by getting in on this new thing. Simon is introduced to us here as a very proud man.

Pride is a very, very severe problem in keeping people from God. Pride is basic to the faith that does not save. And notice a little of the detail or the verse, Simon is called off on Simon magnus because Simon the sorcerer, sorcerer means - sorcerer, I should say, in the Greek is magos, so he's often called Simon magos. The word for sorcery is a word is maguon and it really is a word that means magic, simply maguon even sounds the same but it's original meaning is to be skilled in magian lore. Do you remember that the men who came to the birth of Jesus Christ were called the Magi, that's the same word. The magian lore is the priests religion of Medo-Persia connected with Zoroastrianism, it was kind of a combination of astronomy, astrology, horoscope, it was a science - superstition kind of duo. So these people who were astrologers and soothsayers, sorcerers dealt in incantations, charms, divinations, spells, astrology, horoscopes and so forth. This kind of thing really goes way back to the time of Zoroastrianism, it even goes back to the tower of Babel which was apparently related to the zodiac and all of this was basic to Simon's operation. He was one who called demonic supernatural powers into action to perform wonders. Simon had used his sorcery to capture the minds of these people. The word bewitched means astonish them or dupe them or brought them under his control. He had actually captured these people. Now mark this down, these sorceries actually happened. He actually did supernatural things and it's still being done today. These things were really being pulled off and because of them people's minds were being captured to the control of Simon. And he announced to everybody that he was some great one, some great power of God.

In fact, apparently he had a God complex. For later on Justin Martyr says in his Apology Number I, that there was found the remains of a stone at the foot of a supposed statue in Rome and on this stone it said, Simone sancto Deo which means Simon the Holy God. So he really had an ego problem. And unless you think he's too far out any may who doesn't worship God makes God out of himself. And Simon had that problem and unlike most people wasn't ashamed to announce it. And so he had taken, really, yielded control of his life to demonic magic and he was being used to hold the people captive and now Satan is going to move him into the church to infiltrate the church. He has already gained the confidence of the people, he's kept them in bondage, he's counterfeited the power of God and now Satan's going to slide him right into the church. He had a wrong view of self, egotistical and it was going to become the thing that Satan could use to perpetrate false doctrine in the church. Look at verse 10, "To whom they all gave heed", it's interesting everybody believed him from the least to the greatest, this covers the spectrum. Everybody thought Simon was for real and here's what they said of him, '*"his man is the great power of God". Now Simon seems to have taught along with his practice of magic a kind of pseudo-science or pseudo-philosophy of which we find other traces in gnosticism and some old sources would indicate to us that Simon may have been the founder of gnosticism as a sect or at least one of the founders. Now gnosticism sees God up here and man down here. Now how are we going to connect the two? Gnosticism says that there are series of divine emanation like steps coming down to man, these are kind of manifestations of God called mediators or emanations, the word the Gnostics often used was the word, quo?

powers'. In other words, God self-discloses Himself in a series of emanation some of which become incarnate in human flesh and thus reveal God to men.

That's what the Gnostics say Jesus was simply one of these series of emanations. Now if it isn't too clear to you don't worry about it, they don't exist anyway so you can't really define them. But that's Gnosticism. There was a series, then, of descending emanations kind of a decreasing God into men's form and the Samaritan's said Simon was number-one. "This man", verse is the great power", or the great emanation or the great mediation from God.

So this guy was up there he was sort of God incarnate, in human form. And so he had counterfeited God. It's interesting that you'll find that the demonic activity is not always black magic, blatant Satanism, it is very often white magic, it is often Satanism under the cloak of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. And here Simon was connecting everything to God. The Samaritans were God fearing people. Did you know that? The Samaritans worshipped God in Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans had Messianic hopes.

The woman at the well said, Is this not the Christ? The Samaritans believe in the true God and they actually believed in the confusion of this man's teaching that he was that chief emanation from God. Demonic activity is very subtle it's not always blatantly Satanic. It sometimes masquerades as the truth of the Scripture. And so he had captured these people giving out that he was some great one. And let's be honest with this thing, he might have believed it. It is not unusual to find in his particular age, an age of certain incredulity, that there were a lot of these soothsayers and magicians roaming around and they actually, many of them, believed that they were for real. They were not conscious frauds. They knew they could do these powers. There are people like that today, they're not fooling anybody, they actually believe they are powers of God. Satan has captured them to believe it, Simon probably believed it. And so he thought he was really something. And as long as a man thinks he something he's nothing.

As long as he thinks he's something he cannot come to the right view of himself which is the view that I am nothing, I am the less of the least of all things, what is man that thou art mindful of him or the Son of man that thou visiteth him. Man must see himself lost without God as separated from God as weak, inept and helpless before he can ever entertain the concept of faith that does save, you see. And Simon couldn't. Pride is a real hindrance. Now you say, - Well, I would never go as far as Simon's pride.

Anything that lives without God is proud, it needs God not, you see. It needs not God. And pride grows in everybody's garden. Did you know that?

It's a weed and it grows very easily. And it's interesting that it seems to always grow where there's nothing for it to feed on. It lodges in the heart kind of like a robber, you know, it's concealed in some

kind of dark recess and it waits for it's moment and then it seizes it. Or sometimes it just struts down the main street at high noon but pride is there. We can take it better when it hides, that's for sure. And you know it's kind of an easy sin to indulge in because it doesn't entail the loss of character the loss of health or the loss of wealth which is very often the punishment for other sins and it can be indulged in with apparent immunity and it's no always easily detected and it often wears the guise of virtue and holiness.

In Herod it wore the mask of conscience and it beheaded John the Baptist.

In the Jews it wore the mask of tender regard for God and they killed God's Son. In the Pharisees it wore the mask of purity of life and so sailing magnificently by the sinful women lest his robe should be defiled by the touch of hers it looks down and says I'm holier than thou. And pride is deadly. It cost Nebuchadnezzar his reason. It cost Hezakiah his kingdom.

It cost almost Peter his life. It cost man Eden. It doomed Sodom. It sprang up in angels bosoms and cost them heaven. It cost Haman his life.

It gave Hezziah leprosy and so it goes. Pride damns men. In Job 23 verse, pardon me, Job 35 verses l2 and l3 the Bible says, "The pride of evil men surly God will not hear vanity". In Psalm 10:4, "The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. God is not at all in his thoughts." And God was not in Simon's thoughts, Simonves in Simon's thoughts. Psalm l2:3 says: "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips and the tongue that speaketh proud things". Proverbs ?:l? and l7 says, "These .

does the Lord hate", and then it goes on to say, "these are an abomination to Him", and the first one it lists is a proud look. Psalm 101:5; "A proud heart will I not tolerate says God". Proverbs ?:l3; "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride and arrogance and the evil way do I hate, the Lord said". Proverbs l6:5, "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord". Proverbs l?:l?,"Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall". Proverbs 2l:4 says, "A high look and a proud heart are sin". And a man who comes to God must be broken of pride. In Galatian ?, listen to verse 3, "For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing he deceives himself". What is a man? He is nothing. He is nothing. To come to God a man must recognize that he's nothing. I can't put it anymore simply then James said it in James 4:? he said this, "God resists the proud". Oh, that's a shocking statement. "God resists the proud and gives grace", what? "To the humble" You know, there's an illustration of this that's too classic to bypass in Luke l?, you're familiar with it.

Luke l?:?,"Jesus spoke His parable unto certain who trusted in themselves", isn't that good? Trusted in themselves. "That they were righteous and they despised others." They were the holiers than thou, you know, looking for the first vacancy in the Trinity and hopelessly lost. And He gives an

illustration of these, says this; 'Two men went up into the temple to pray. The one a Pharisee the other a tax collector". Now we all have problems with tax collectors but in those days it was personal. We can all kind of hate the IRS with a little bit of retribution because it's impersonal but in those days the tax collector came to your door, you knew who he was and so you could attach your hatred to an individual and it became a real problem. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God", isn't that interesting?

Prayed with himself and used the term God. And he says, he's not really asking for anything he's just reciting to God all the wonders of his own .

character. "I thank Thee that I'm not as other men", you say, Oh, sick.

"By the deeds of the flesh shall no law be justified." That stands in the way of God. That's between a man and God. Then you look in the corner on the tax collector, he's way over in a corner, "He wouldn't lift up so much as his eyes toward heaven but he beats on his chest and says, God, be merciful to me a sinner". This is the story of the good man who went to hell an the bad man who went to heaven. The next verse says, "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone who exalts himself shall be abased he that humbles himself shall be exalted.

You see the wrong view of man prevents man from coming to God. And that was Simon's problem. Oh, I think of it, let's see Revelation 3:l7, the church at Laodicea, he says, "'You say your rich and increased with goods and you don't know you're poor and wretched and blind and naked". The only man who comes to God in true faith is the man who's broken. And Simon went around saying that he was some great one. The only man who finds faith is a humble man. I love Job 22:2?, listen to it, "When men are cast down then shalt thou say there is lifting up and he shall save the humble person".

Boy, when you get broken over your inadequacies, when you get broken over a rejection of Jesus Christ, when you're broken over a failure to be obedient to God, when you're broken over your lostness that's when you can come to God with faith that does save. Job 25 says, "Behold even to the moon it shineth not", the moon can't even brag, it's light isn't even its own. "yea the stars are not pure in his sight", if you get close enough to a star you' see that's it's not all pure glitter. "How much less man, who is a worm?"

A lot you've got to brag about. Matthew l? Jesus said, "You know, you can't come into My kingdom until you become like a little", what? "A little child And then He went on to say, "here's how a little child is, he humbleth himself". James, oh this is such a good verse, 4:10 is practical, listen to what it says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up". Now humility is not running around saying, - On, I'm nothing, humility is just knowing in your heart you're inadequacies and acknowledging before God that you are hopelessly lost without Him and that you have nothing

redeeming about your person. And only humble people find the faith that saves, proud people don't need it, see. Perhaps another severe illustration that just rings in my mind is John 5:44 Jesus talks to the leaders of Israel just listen to what He says, shocking statement, He says: "How can you belie It's impossible is what He's saying. "How can you believe who receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that comes from God?" All you want i applause from each other you don't care about God. How could you believe?

And so Simon gave out that he was some hot stuff and everybody bought it.

Verse 11 says,"And to him they had regard because for a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries". Justin Martyr says his birthplace was in that area and likely lived there all his life so he had longed for many year held them in bondage. People were duped and they thought he was from God a he wasn't.

The second thing that was wrong with Simon, he not only had a wrong view of self he had a wrong view of salvation. His view of self was egotistical, his view of salvation was external. Listen to this, verse l2, "But when they believed", and there was a great revival that some of the people really believed, a great revival, "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ they were .

baptized both men and women". Boy, this was great. Simon was something but Philip was something else. Philip moved in and he was doing miracles back in verse 7, unclean spirits were coming out and people with palsies and people were lame were being healed and miracles were going on and people were getting saved and God was moving and people were joining Philip and Simon was losing his following. The crowd was dwindling. Notice Philip's message, two things, the kingdom of God - that's a general term referring to all of the truth concerning God, God's great rule in the universe. That's a broad term. Philip preached God's great kingdom and then he zeroed in on the name of Christ. Whenever you see the term - the name of Jesus Christ -it means all that He is and everything implied in His name. So Philip had two parts to his message the general truth about God and His universe and the specific things about Jesus Christ and he nailed that truth down. He like Paul apparently preached the whole council of God. He didn't just go in and give them the gospel with nothing else he preached the whole kingdom of God and centralized it on Jesus Christ. And people believed and were baptized both men and women. Well Simon watched all this happen and got a little panicky, you see. I mean, his believers were moving out on him and .

they were joining Philip and Philip was doing stuff that he couldn't do.

Well Simon finally figured if you can't lick them join them. Then, no doubt being impressed by Philip and he actually did believe what was going on at least the miraculous end of it. He thought Philip had another particular bag of tricks that maybe he could lay hold of and he ought to get in on this baby so

he figured I'll join up. But he looked at salvation as a commodity to be added to his bag of tricks, see. He, now watch this, he didn't see salvation as a totality of life, as a total transformation as Paul says, "IF any man be in Christ he's", what? "A new creation, old things pass away", what becomes new? All things. He didn't see it, he thought it's something to be added. And I told you about the story of the guy I spoke at the Hollywood Christian group and the Moslem that came up and he said, I think I'd like to receive Christ and he did and then after he prayed and asked Christ into his life he looked at me and said, Oh, isn't that good, he says, now I have two Gods, Jesus and Mohammed, see. Well, you see, to him Christianity was a commodity to be added to what he already had. That's how Simon saw it as a new bag of tricks to give him greater wonder working ability to hold the people captive. You see, his view of salvation was as an external commodity it wasn't legitimate. He didn't see it as a totality of commitment of life. Verse l3, "Then Simon himself believed also", oh, it sounds so good, "and when he was baptized he continued with Philip and was amazed beholding the miracles and signs which were done". He hung around, he watched, he looked at those miracles. But you know something?

There is a faith that doesn't save. Do you know that? You saw it in John 2 Jesus did miracles that time when He came to the temple and His ministry began and a bunch of people believed Him and it says He didn't commit Himself to those people, verse 2l and 22 and 23 there, He didn't commit Himself to those people because He knew what was in them. What did He know?

He knew their faith was not the faith that saved. They believed the miracle they weren't willing to give their life to Him as their Christ and Messiah.

Did you know that James said the devils believe and tremble? James says, Don't show me your faith without works show me your works and I'll know your faith. Faith better mean transformed life or it isn't true faith. Simon wanted a bag of miracle tricks. He was a phony. But it says he continued.

Why do you think he continued? I think three things, at least, number one he continued because he wanted to maintain a following. If all of his followers went to Philip he figured he'd go with them because he wanted to be associated with what was going on. Second thing, people would associate the power with him if he stayed next to Philip. I'll just believe that Philip had Simon on his tail all the time and it might have even been that whenever Philip was doing the miracles Simon was doing some hocus-pokus in the background so people would think he was in on it. And the third reason he hung around was he was looking for an opportunity to figure out how to buy this power because the sorcerers would exchange their tricks and their incantations for money and he figured I'll get in on this deal, surly Philip's in the same thing I'm in. That's what makes me believe that Simon was not a conscious fraud that he actually believed that he was doing. He figured he'd buy Philip's tricks. And he went through the rigmarole to get in. But he had a wrong view of salvation, external. You know, there are people like that today who think salvation's an external issue? That it's religious formality that's it's going through some religious activity. One of the great things about this that is pin-pointed

to me in this passage is the fact that he was baptized but it didn't save him. There are some people today who believe that baptism saves. Did you know that there's an entire church that's based upon that premise? That the Roman Catholic Church. I was reading this week in Ludwig Ott, the German Catholic theologian, who really makes the statement of Catholic doctrine for today and redefines Thomas Aquinas and all the church councils and this is what it says in the Catholic theology books, listen as I read it. Baptism confers the grace of salvation. The Council of Trent says if anyone denies that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is confessed in Baptism the guilt of original sin is remitted. If you deny that or if you deny that the whole of that which has the true and proper nature of sin is not taken away by Baptism let him be anathema. It goes on, quote "Baptism has the power both of eradicating sin and affecting inner sanctification. Baptism affects the remission of all punishment and sin both eternal and temporal. Even if it is unworthily received valid Baptism imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark. Baptism by water is necessary for all men without exception for salvation." end-quote Now that's what it says an that is not true. Simon was baptized and Simon went to hell. He was never saved. Salvation is not external. That's what messed him up he thought it was. Don't you ever think that salvation is a commodity to be added to you life. Don't you ever think that Jesus Christ is some religious bag of trick to go in addition to the way you want to live. It's a total commitment of life or it's nothing. True salvation is not mere profession, it is not external identity, it is no sudden impulse, it is no vanishing sentiment it is an entire commitment of life to Jesus Christ and it is a transformation.

So, "That for me to live is Christ". Simon had a wrong view of self and a wrong view of salvation.

Thirdly, he had a wrong view of the Spirit. He saw self egotistically he saw salvation externally and he saw the Spirit economically. Verses l4 to l?, he thought he could buy the Holy Spirit. He thought that was the magical power he needed. Now to him the Holy Spirit was just another one of these demons that he trafficked in and so he just figured he'd buy into this on?. Verse l4 leads us into this: "Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God they sent unto them Peter and John". Now this is interesting because the progress of Philip's work there has reached Jerusalem and so the Jerusalem church wants to send Peter and John up there to check on it. They want some apostolic verification that Samaritans are really getting saved, you know, those semi-Gentile schismatic Samaritans we want to check on. And so here comes Peter and John, terrific combination you know Peter was ardent and bold and zealous and rash and John was mild, gentle, tender and persuasive. They made a perfect combination. And the reason they came was probably three-fold; number-one, to help Philip in the harvest: number-two, to give really the sanction of the apostles to what he was doing and number-three to confer the Holy Spirit. Verse l?; so here they come from Jerusalem, "when they got there", verse l5 says, "they were come down", as I told you last time everything is down from Jerusalem because it's up on that plateau, "they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he was fallen upon none of them only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus", now watch. They had been saved, they had been baptized they had not received the Holy Spirit. Now I must make a point here because this is

something that's been misunderstood. Some people say, You see, - I heard a guy on the radio saying this the other day, he said, - You see, this proves that you can be saved and not have the Holy Spirit.

Yes, you see, but that's only when you do not understand dispensational distinction or transitional distinction. Here in the book of Acts you have a transition, you never want to build a doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the book of Acts. If you want the doctrine of the Holy Spirit go into Paul's epistles and take them because there you have the flow of the life of the church. Here's the transition. You say, - Well, why didn't -if you believe every Christian possess the Spirit. Absolutely, you receive the Spirit the moment you're saved that's very clear. Romans ?:? says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he's not a Christian". I Cor. ?:lo ev . '??hat!

to the cruddy Corinthians the Holy Spirit is given, the Bible says, Know you not that your body's the temple of the Holy Spirit? Which you have of God and you're not your own you're bought with a price". So at the same time you were bought with a price you obtained the Spirit, in the same context. The same time you came to Christ. You say, - Well, why didn't the get the Spirit? Watch this, for five hundred years, in this transition it' important, for five hundred years the temple at Jerusalem and the temple.

at Gerizim had been rivals. The Samaritans worshipped at Gerizim, the Jews worshipped at Jerusalem and they each had their own thing and they were rivals. The woman at the well said, What are you doing talking to me? To Jesus, remember, Jews have no dealing with Samaritans. The woman at the well said you worship God at Jerusalem and we worship God at Mount Gerizim.

Those two temples had been rivals. Now watch this, if the Spirit of God .

had fallen immediately on the Samaritan believers when they received Christ through Philip there would have been no connection between them and the Jerusalem church. Are you with me? Therefore, the schism would have been perpetuated. They would have said, You've got your deal we've got ours and Jesus had prayed, Father, I pray that they may be one. And God answered their prayer by holding back the coming of the Spirit of God until Jerusalem Jews and apostles could arrive and allow the Spirit of God to come to the laying on of their hands that those Gentiles and Jews together might know there was unity in the church. Now,.you see, if you understand the transition there's no problem. The same thing happens later on at the house of Cornelius when Cornelius is saved Peter is there again and Jews are there again so that the Jews might see that the Samaritans have the same thing they have. We find in chapter l?, there's some of those John the Baptist disciples and Paul says to them, Have you come to know the Holy Spirit, been baptized in the Spirit and they said we haven't even heard of the Holy Spirit. What's the Holy Spirit? We're just old disciples of John the Baptist, we've been wandering around the hills and don't know what's happened. So Paul talks to them about Jesus and they accept Jesus Christ and there from Paul the Spirit of God

descends upon them. In each case it was a distinct act and apostles were always present. Why? In order to tie every other group to the Jerusalem church so that unity was together, was tied. Not only that, the Jews were always suspect of the Samaritans and they were always suspect of the Gentiles. Right? God made sure both times that what happened at Pentecost was repeated again. And I believe the signs and wonders that occurred at Pentecost, at least some of them, occurred again here in Acts chapter ? because it says Simon saw what was going on.

He wanted to buy the miracle powers so some miracles must have happened.

And you remember over in chapter 11, it's so good, you know Peter goes running back to the Jerusalem church and verse l5 he says, "And I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them". And he says this, "As on us at the beginning". That's why I think there must have been some of the same phenomena that happened at Pentecost for him to make that connection. Then he says this, verse l7; "For as much then that God gave them the same gift as He did unto us". Don't you see, Peter, that's exactly what God wants you to say? So that there's unity. Later on in chapter l5 Peter makes the same report to the Jerusalem council again. You see, God wanted to tie the whole church together into one unit so that there wouldn't be any fractions. Don assume that the Holy Spirit always comes later on just because of Acts. The only reason He came later on here was to bring the unity that Jesus Christ prayed for but once the church is Jew and Gentile and Samaritan, once it's one then everybody added to it is added to that unity by the baptism of the Spirit at the moment of salvation. There's no need to create disunity and if the Spirit of God didn't come when I believed then I wasn't connected to the body because I Cor. l2:l2 says; "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body". The moment you come into the body it's by the Spirit and we're all made to drink of the same Spirit. So every believer possesses the Spirit the moment of salvation. In the book of Acts there was a transition. And it's interesting that Peter's always around. Peter was the one who opened the door to the Jews in Acts 2. He opened the door to the Samaritans in Acts ?. He opened the door to the Gentiles in Acts 10. That's because Jesus said unto him, "I give unto you the keys to the kingdom". He unlocked the gospel and the coming of the Spirit in each of those movements. Well, Simon saw this stuff and he 'When Simon saw that through laying on of the just flipped. Verse l?;

apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money. Saying, Give me also this power that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Spirit." Wow, this is too much. I'd like to buy this one. He thought the Holy Spirit was an economic commodity. Philip's magi: was something but Peter and John, they had really pulled some stuff. And so he treated Peter and John like other dealers in the black arts, you know? How much do you want for your trick, this Holy Spirit? He didn't want the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit within, did he? He was a vile, demon infest+d individual. He wanted the power of capturing people with more miracles. In fact, the word simony which is an ecclesiastical word comes from this man's name and it means the illegal buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices. There use to be in the big structures of the church, if you wanted to be a bishop you paid somebody off and you got the job. So Simon had a high view of himself and a low view of

God. He thought he was some great one, he thought God was some kind of cheap commodity to be bought like a bag of tricks to add to his repertoire. He didn't understand the glory of God. You want to know something interesting about God? Nothing He has is for sale. Why? Cause you haven' got nothing He wants. The only thing God has is free, free, free. He gives it all freely. It's all over the Bible. Read Romans 3, Romans 5, free, free everything's free. Remember old Naaman the leper? Naaman said, I've got to get rid of this leprosy. So they said, Well, you ought to go down and see the prophet. So Naaman packed up all of his goodies and said, I'll buy a miracle off that prophet. Remember? Boy, he was loaded and he went on down there and he said, Here I am, prophet, look what I've got for you, I'll pay you all this - heal my leprosy. The prophet said, You keep your junk, just go take seven ducks in that dirty Jordan river.

Naaman said, You know who I am? I don't go around in dirty rivers, the rivers up where I live are clean, ecologically pure. And he went away in a big huff but his leprosy was still there. So he finally came back and took those seven ducks in that dirty river and he came out and he was clean. What was God saying? You can't buy My miracles they're free.

And all those prophets servants saw all those goodies going back and they thought, hmmm - that's a shame. And so he trailed Naaman, you see, and he got some of Naaman's goodies, you know what else he got? Naaman's leprosy. Read it, II Kings chapter 5. So you see, you can't buy anything that God has because you haven't got anything that's worth anything to Him.

What are you going to say, - God, I'd like to give you --whatever you put in the next blank is ridiculous, you haven't got anything He wants. You can .

buy God. Aren't you glad it's free?

I'll never forget a man, never forget him. His name was Mike. I'm not going to give you his last name, I knew him very well. He believed you had to earn salvation and part of it got so much to be the captor of his heart he believed Jesus was coming January l, l??? and he knew that he had in desperation to make sure that he was saved before that day.

He had half a million dollars in real estate, properties and all kinds of other things and he liquidated every penny of it and with it he bought twenty - forty thousand, I can't remember the figure exactly, of the Good News for Modern Man, passed them out everywhere, bought little Jesus glow-in-the-dark praying hands, crosses with Jesus Saves, Jesus' pictures and gobs of holy hardware, all kinds of stuff, you know, to pass out. He was earning his way into heaven. I said, Mike it isn't that way, it isn't that way. But he went ahead and did it. He became a pauper and he got ready on January lst. It was a sad January 2nd.

You can't buy grace, it isn't for sale. It's free. It's like Matt said the other night, Why do people want to work so hard to be something they can't be when for nothing they can accept Jesus? That's looking at it from a child's view but it's true. There's no price, Jesus paid it all.

Your big check to the church doesn't even buy the Spirit's power. Well, Peter heard this and he got mad. Oh, I like it when he gets mad, he's terrific. "Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee", now the Greek says, hang on to your hats - To hell with you and your money. I didn't say that, Peter did. Boy, Peter really got uptight. I mean, that's salty fisherman prose. It's a sad thing because everything looked so good. Verse 2l, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter", you're not even into this thing, he says. "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God." You look good on the outside, Simon, on the inside you're rotten, you're rotten. You see, he's acknowledging in the face of Simon he's got a wrong view of the Spirit. You can't buy it, Simon, it's not for sale.

Lastly, he had a wrong view of sin, evasion - he wouldn't face it.

Verse 22, quickly: Peter says, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness".

Kakia - general evil. "And pray God", watch this, "if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee". Peter's acknowledging that he doesn't know whether God will forgive him. You know, that you ought to repent of your sins not because God will forgive you but because your sin is rotten. That's enough reason to repent of it and then hope that He will forgive you. And so he says repent if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. You see, what he says to Simon is - Have a good view of sin, the one that is correct. See it for what it is and turn from it. Repentance, metanoeo, a hundred and eighty degree turns, a hundred and eighty degree turn from sin toward God. He says, Turn around, if God may forgive you. "For I perceive that thou art in the gall", that's the word for bile, "of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." You're tied up in a rotten kind of evil. He says, See your sin and turn from it.

See your sin and turn from it. Proverbs, Solomon said, .The sinner shall be holden with the cords of sin". Simon was bound. He says, Turn to God, see your sin, repent, repent, verse 22, repent. What did he do? Verse 24, "Then answered Simon and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me", and some of the western texts, the other texts say that he was sobbing and shaking and trembling, "Pray to the Lord for me that none of these things which you have spoken come upon me". You know something? Simon's in the same boat, he's just saying - Do something to save my hide. He's still not repenting. There no forgiveness asked for, no confession, no self-judgment, no acknowledging sin, no exhibit of confidence in the Lord, no asked forgiveness, no nothing.

Just - Don't let me get it, don't let me get it. He was sad and he was scared but he wasn't saved. In II Cor. 7: ? and 10 it says, "There is a sorrow that doesn't work repentance." And then it says, "There is a Godly sorrow that does work repentance". Simon had a wrong view of sin. He evade it he never

faced it. He has the faith that doesn't save. He had a wrong view of self, egotistical; salvation, external: the Spirit,.economic and sin he evaded it. What about your faith? Is it faith that saves? Oh, I pray God that it is. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You that we again have been able to see the strategy of the enemy Satan. And, Lord, we know that there are some here at Grace Church that Satan has sewn in here as tares, who have faith that doesn't save. And maybe they look good on the outside and they've even been baptized and even continued for awhile, oh, God, we pray that You might while grace still is offered to them bring them to a place of repentance that Simon never came to. That they might trade their faith that doesn't save for faith that does. That they might have a true view of themselves as nothing, worthless, lost, hopeless. A true view of salvation is something internal, life-changing, and transforming. Totally a work of God. A right view of the Spirit that He is given freely to those who believe. A right view of sin that it is faced and repented of. God, may it be so. May no one leave this place with faith that doesn't save. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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